

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-11 ISO-00 AGR-05 COME-00

HEW-02 DPW-01 EB-07 DHA-02 ORM-02 SCA-01 IGA-02 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 PC-01

TRSE-00 /162 W

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O P 231345Z JAN 76

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7722

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2581

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GENEVA 0484

DELIVER TO D/HA AT OPENING OF BUSINESS JAN 23

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP MR AG

SUBJ: ICRC/LICROSS APPEAL FOR REFUGEES IN WESTERN SAHARA,
ALGERIA AND MOROCCO

REF: A. STATE 014263, B. RABAT 0344, C. ALGIERS 0139

1. MISOFF MET WITH ICRC'S PIERRE GAILLARD AND PHILIP
GRAND DHATUEVILLE EVENING JAN 22, AND ROBERT TISSOT OF
LICROSS THIS MORNING TO DISCUSS REFUGEE SITUATION IN
WESTERN SAHARA, ALGERIA AND MOROCCO AND CLARIFY CERTAIN
QUESTIONS POSED REFTELS. FOLLOWING INFORMATION DERIVED
FROM CONVERSATIONS MAY BE USEFUL TO DEPARTMENT IN MEETING
WITH ICRC DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS HOCKE TODAY.

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2. IN REGARD REF B, PARA 3, PIERRE GAILLARD, WHO RETURNED FROM MOROCCAN/MAURITANIAN TRIP JAN 20 CONFIRMED THAT REFUGEES IN "WESTERN SAHARA" ARE ACTUALLY LOCATED IN POLISARIO-CONTROLLED AREAS. GAILLARD STATED THAT GOM HAD WELCOMED HIS VISIT AND EVEN PROVIDED HIM AIR TRANSPORTATION TO SMARA AND EL AIOUN. BOTH COMMUNITIES ARE WITHIN AREA OF MOROCCAN ARMY CONTROL AND HE MENTIONED NO CAMPS WITHIN AREA WHERE HE WAS AWARE OF ANY DIRE OR EXTENDED HARDSHIP. IN MOROCCO GENERALLY, HE REPORTED (AND TISSOT LATER CONFIRMED) THE 30,000-PLUS REFUGEES FROM ALGERIA ARE NOT RPT NOT IN NEED OF FOOD OR MEDICAMENTS, WHICH ARE CURRENTLY BEING PROVIDED BY THE GOM, BUT ONLY OF SUCH ITEMS AS TENTS, BLANKETS, COTS, CLOTHING, AND SOME SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTARY MILK SUPPLIES FOR CHILDREN AND THE AGED. THIS POINT REFLECT IN LICROSS/ICRC APPEAL.

3. GAILLARD STATED THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE FOR HIM AS A RESULT OF HIS TRIP TO ARRIVE AT ANY FIRM ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES IN THIS REGION. IN THIS CONNECTION HE MENTIONED THAT DURING HIS VISIT TO MAURITANIA HE HAD NOT BEEN PERMITTED BY

MAURITANIAN AUTHORITIES TO TRAVEL UP THE COAST TO VILLA CISNEROS TO INSPECT THE SITUATION THERE. IT SEEMED CLEAR THAT, NEITHER IN THE MOROCCAN NOR MAURITANIAN CONTROLLED AREAS OF THE WESTERN SAHARA HAD GAILLARD ACTUALLY VISITED ANY LARGE CONCENTRATIONS OF REFUGEES.

4. AS CONCERNS STATUS OF POLISARIO-SPONSORED "SAHARAN RED CRESCENT SOCIETY", REF B PARA 7, GAILLARD STATED THAT THEIR BID FOR AFFILIATION WITH "INTERNATIONAL RED CRESCENT ORGANIZATION" HAD NOT BEEN ACCEPTED SINCE "SAHARAN RED CRESCENT" DOES NOT MEET ICRC REQUIREMENTS. HE INDICATED STRONGLY THAT SAHARAN RED CRESCENT WAS PROBABLY A PURELY POLITICAL FABRICATION AND NOT AT THIS TIME A SERIOUS PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATION. HE SPOKE QUITE APPROVINGLY, BY CONTRAST, OF THE MAURITANIAN RED CROSS.

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5. AS OPPOSED TO GAILLARD'S SOMEWHAT IMPRECISE PORTRAYAL OF CONDITIONS IN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA CONTROLLED AREAS OF REGION, PHILIP GRAND D'HAUTEVILLE, ICRC REGIONAL DELEGATE FOR NORTHERN AFRICA, PRESENTED GRIM DETAILED PICTURE OF CONDITIONS OF REFUGEES IN CAMPS UNDER POLISARIO CONTROL, WHICH HE HAD VISITED APPROXIMATELY WEEK BEFORE

GAILLARD'S TRIP TO SOUTHERN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA. HE REPEATED THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO VISIT ALL CAMPS AND THEREFORE COULD ONLY ESTIMATE ROUGHLY NUMBERS INVOLVED. HOWEVER, HE STATED THAT IN ONE CAMP SOUTHEAST OF SMARA WHERE HE STAYED OVERNIGHT THERE WERE MORE THAN 9,000 REFUGEES OF WHOM SOME 60 PERCENT WERE CHILDREN, LIVING IN ABOUT 650 TENTS, WHICH USUALLY ACCOMMODATE SIX TO EIGHT PEOPLE EACH, AND WITH ONLY 3-1/2 THOUSAND BLANKETS AT THEIR DISPOSITION. HE DESCRIBED THE CHILDREN AS WANDERING ABOUT THE CAMPS SEMI-NAKED IN AN AREA WHERE TEMPERATURES RISE TO A MAXIMUM OF 8 DEGREES CENTIGRADE DURING THE DAY AT THIS TIME OF YEAR AND DROP TO MINUS 4 DEGREES AT NIGHT. WHILE THE PEOPLE IN THESE CAMPS COULD NOT AS YET BE DESCRIBED AS STARVING, HE SAID, MANY HAD NOT EATEN FOR 48 HOURS AS OF THE TIME HE VISITED THEIR CAMPS. LACK OF NOURISHMENT IS EVIDENT PRINCIPALLY AMONG THE CHILDREN WHO ARE SHOWING MANY OF THE SAME SYMPTOMS OF FALLING HAIR, SKIN BLOTCHES AND SWOLLEN STOMACHES THAT WERE FAMILIAR IN BIAFRA, THE SAHEL AND BANGLADESH, D'HAUTEVILLE SAID. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD SEEN SOME SIXTY FRESH GRAVES AT THE CAMP NEAR SMARA. WHILE HE COULDN'T ATTEST TO NUMBERS OR CONDITIONS IN ALL CAMPS UNDER POLISARIO CONTROL, D'HAUTEVILLE SAID THAT HIS PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS TALLIED WITH THOSE SET FORTH IN JEAN-FRANCIS HELD'S ARTICLE ON THE SUBJECT IN THE CURRENT "NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR" (PAGES 42-43), WHICH WAS BASED ON HELD'S MORE EXTENDED VISITS TO THESE SITES. HE HAD HOWEVER NOTED SIMILAR CONDITIONS IN CAMPS IN THE TFARITI AREA, WHERE, HE SAID, THERE WERE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF SHELLING BY MOROCCAN FORCES WITHIN THE LAST 48 HOURS. CONFIDENTIAL

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PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 /162 W

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FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7723

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2582

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GENEVA 0484

6. GRAND D'HAUTEVILLE WAS UNCERTAIN OF CONDITIONS OF
REGUGEES IN CAMPS UNDER ALGERIAN CONTROL NEAR
TINDOUG, WHICH IS WITHIN THE LICROSS AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY,
BUT HE ASSUMED THEY WERE SOMEWHAT BETTER
THAN THOSE WITHIN POLISARIO-CONTROLLED "WESTERN SAHARA".
(THIS ASSUMPTION WAS LATER CONFIRMED BY TISSOT. UNDER
PRESENT ARRANGEMENT LICROSS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR "REFUGEES" IN
ALGERIA AND MOROCCO, WHILE ICRC IS CONCERNED WITH "DISPLACED
PERSONS" IN WESTERN SAHARA). HE REPORTED THAT OF THE JOINT
APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE AMOUNT OF 5 MILLION SWISS FRANCS
FOR RELIEF IN THIS AREA, ONLY
36,000 SWISS FRANCS HAVE BEEN PLEDGED TO DATE IN
ADDITION TO SOME GOODS IN KIND . HE ADDED THAT ICRC "WILL
NOT GO INTO THE RED" ON THIS PROJECT, AND IF FINANCIAL
AID IS NOT FORTHCOMING IN THE QUANTITIES
NEEDED, IT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE
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ASSISTANCE ON ITS OWN ACCOUNT. GRAND D'HAUTEVILLE
RETURNS TO ALGERIA TODAY, WHERE HE HOPES TO
VISIT MOROCCAN PRISONERS BEING HELD BY THE POLISARIO.

7. TISSOT, WHO HAD TRAVELLED IN MOROCCO EARLY THIS MONTH
(REFS), AND WHOSE SWEDISH AIDE, LAMPILL, HAS
JUST RETURNED FROM VISIT TO CAMPS NEAR TINDOUF
AND IN WESTERN SAHARA, GENERALLY CONFIRMED FOREGOING
POINTS. WHILE NOTING AGREED FIGURE OF 30,000 EXPELEES

FROM ALGERIA DIVIDED ABOUT EVENLY BETWEEN CAMPS AT OUDJA, NADOR AND FIJUIJ, HE WOULD HAZARD NO ESTIMATE WHATEVER AS TO NUMBERS IN WESTERN SAHARA AND IN TINDOUF AREA. HE SAID THAT 20 TO 30 EXPELEES NOW LIVE TOGETHER IN TENTS MADE FOR TEN, AND THAT COTS ARE SORELY NEEDED TO GET THESE PEOPLE OFF THE GROUND DURING WINTER NIGHTS, AS WELL AS BLANKETS AND CLOTHES. LAMPILL REPORTED SITUATION IN TINDOUF-SAHARAN SECTOR IMPROVED SOMEWHAT SINCE HIS LAST VISIT MONTH AGO, WITH MORE ALGERIAN RED CRESCENT ACTIVITY EVIDENT, AND LARGER AGGLOMERATIONS OF REFUGEES SEEN NEARBY THE ROADS AND PISTES. HOWEVER, TISSOT DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER SUPPLY AND, AT LEAST EQUALLY, DISTRIBUTION SITUATIONS, AND WONDERS HOW LONG ALGERIANS AND ICRC/LICROSS WILL BE ABLE CONTINUE EFFORT UNAIDED AS WINTER WEARS ON.

8. ALL THREE OFFICIALS ADMITTED POLITICAL MAINIPULATION OF ISSUE BY BOTH ALGERIANS AND MOROCCANS, AS REFS B AND C INDICATE, AND CONFESSED THEY WERE UNSURE AS TO REAL REASONS FOR CREATION OF SITUATION, I.E., WHETHER WESTERN (SPANISH) SAHARANS HAD DIS-PLACED SIMPLY OUT OF FEAR FANNED BY ALGERIAN PROPAGANDA, OR WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ACTUAL MISTREATMENT ON PART OF MOROCCAN AND MAURITIAN FORCES. GRAND D'HAUTEVILLE MADE POINT, HOWEVER, THAT MOTIVATIONS ARE IMMATERIAL TO ICRC IN PRESENT SITUATION: ITS CONCERN IS HUMANITARIAN ONE OF RELIEVING SUFFERING AND PREVENTING POSSIBLE STARVATION IN THIS REGION. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, WE CONSIDER COUNSEL OF REFS B AND C ON POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION OF ANY US PARTICIPATION WITH HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM EXCLUSIVELY VERY WELL TAKEN. DALE
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